

"Piece By Piece -- Jericho!"

Text: Mark 10:47, "And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, thou Son of David; have mercy on me."

Scripture: Mark 10:46-52

When we speak of Jesus being at Jericho, we are talking of the New Testament Jericho. There is a difference. Old Testament Jericho was destroyed you will recall, if you have been feading the Bible readings for this week in the book of Joshua. It was rebuilt later on the same site, but the New Testament Jericho as found by modern archaeology is located a mile or so South of the Old Testament city. ^{It was about 15 miles from Jerusalem.} Herod the Great was the founder of the NT Jericho. It was his winter quarters and its balmy winter climate was more to be preferred than the dampness of the winter in Jerusalem.

Zacchaeus the best known of the tax collectors, held an office at Jericho, and it was to his very elegant house that Jesus went to dine with Zacchaeus. It was said that his house was among the finest in the city and equalled the best of the city of Pompeii.

The city was located on the Western edge of the Jordan plain and just outside ^{West} of the city heading South toward Jerusalem, Jesus would have entered the great canyon of ~~the Jordan~~ what is known as the WADI*QELT. A Wadi, is a dry stream or creek bed, except during the rainy season. Travelers in the Holy land are warned to look toward the mountains when traveling in or near these dry stream beds. For if a sudden storm should appear, and this would be evidenced by extremely dark and black clouds coming over the tops of the mountains, within a matter of minutes, a dry streambed can become a raging torrent which sweeps everything in its path away. It was through this dry streambed that the main road traveled to Jerusalem.

If you have ever seen pictures of this canyon, it resembles our Grand Canyon in the West. It was here in these same mountains that Jesus had faced the temptations shortly after His baptism, and it was now a journey through these same mountains that He was taking for the last time.

As we look at our story as found in this section of Mark, Jesus is on His way to the Passover. We read that He was on His way through Jericho and there

was a great crowd of people, as well as His disciples. There are several reasons for the crowds. The first being that it was common for a Rabbi to teach and instruct his pupils as he walked. Jesus was a Rabbi in the sense that people thought of Him as a great teacher. So it was common that as He walked along teaching His disciples that people crowded in to be a part of the instruction He was giving as He passed by.

The second reason for the large crowds here, was due to the fact that every male Jew over the age of 12, who lived within 15 miles of Jerusalem, must attend the Passover. Since it was impossible for the law to be completely upheld, ~~Jericho was in a spot through which~~ many of those who could not go, lined the street to see the pilgrims pass by on their way to Jerusalem. Thus someone like Jesus would attract a large audience, for many had heard of Him and what He could supposedly do.

But it was also a fact that there were 20,000 and 20,000 Levites who were attached to the Temple. Naturally they could not all serve at one time and so they were divided into 26 groups which served in rotation. At the Passover they were all needed & were all on duty. Many of them lived in Jericho and it safe to assume that many of them were lining the street that day when Jesus came through. Most of them had not started to go to Jerusalem for the Passover and so this afforded them the opportunity to see this so called miracle worker first hand.

As Jesus and His disciples approached the North gate into the town, a blind man was sitting by the road. His name was Bartimaeus, which meant son of Timai, or Son of the unclean. Perhaps his father was a leper and this is the derivation of his name. But in any event there he was listening to the sounds all around him. He was not an unfamiliar sight, for beggars were prevalent and common in these times. They sat by the waysides of the cities & asked for handouts so they could get by. He must have gathered from the noise of the many people that this was someone of importance. Perhaps he had inquired and someone had said it was Jesus of Nazareth, for we read that when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he

began to cry out. But he did not identify Jesus as most people would have done. Instead, he called Him, "Jesus you Son of David." Now this was giving to Jesus a title that very many in that crowd doubted that He deserved. They tried to shut him up, partly because they were unable to hear what this Jesus was saying as He walked along, and partly because he was making a statement with which they did not agree. But the more they tried to shush him, the louder he became. He was probably a source of embarrassment to them much like a small child who says something he should not say, and says it very loudly. And when told he must not say that, in an effort to quiet him, he will invariably speak just as loudly, "Why don't you want me to say so and so?" Bartimaeus had made a declaration and when the people tried to shut him up he repeated, "Thou Son of David; have mercy on me," vs 48b.

~~Exemption~~ So rather than create an ugly scene, they permit him to be brought to Jesus, when Jesus stops and calls for him. So he comes to Jesus and is asked what he wants by Jesus, and he replies very simply, "That I might receive my sight." Nothing more, nothing less. Just to be able to see. And strangely enough there is no magic formula involved here, just the simple words, "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole."

And then we read that he had received his eyesight right away, and he followed Jesus as He went down the road,

The significant thing about this portion of scripture is the fact that here is portrayed in the book of Mark, the last public healing made by Jesus. He was only about 15 miles from His Divine appointment with destiny. With the end of His life and ministry, and yet He found time to heal just another blind man.

I think we can see several things that are noteworthy in this scripture. First we can see that it isn't numbers that Jesus was interested in. Nor was He concerned with where He was and to whom He was speaking. He heard a voice in the crowd, and that voice clamored for assistance, and so He stopped. He stood still. What a wonderful phrase for us to copy. We are so often caught up in the hustle and bustle of our everyday lives, that we do not have

have time to stand still, let alone minister to the needs of someone who has a problem. We go from morning until night and fall into bed exhausted and if asked what was the most worthy thing done today, we can only answer, "I kept on the go." How unlike Jesus. He "stood still." Not an invitation to idleness or laziness, but an invitation to take note of the needs that surround each of us every day.

Another thing to be noted is that Bartimaeus saw and recognized Jesus for what He was. He could not see with his eyes, but he could see with his heart and with his intellect. How unlike so many other folk. They want some grand entrance into their lives by someone dressed the part of royalty. They want the grand treatment, and are not content with the simple and childlike faith that is needed to have the Master come into their lives.

Someone once said, "We must ask people to think, but we must not expect them to become theologians before they are Christians." Christianity begins with a personal reaction and response to Jesus Christ. It is not an intellectual understanding of the great doctrines of the church, or God's complete plan for the past present and future of the world. But it is instead an instinctive feeling within the heart, that here is the one who can meet my needs. We may never be able to understand Bultmann and Tillich, or Brunner or the other deep theologians. This does not matter. What does matter is the response of your heart to the cry that comes from within your own heart.

The last thing to be noted by Bartimaeus coming to Jesus, was that he was not just to be content to be healed. He accepted his healing, but then he followed Him. He started with a need, and showed his thanks for the fulfillment of his need with a loyalty to the one who took care of his need.

But you see, the Saviour is still passing by the hearts and lives of countless people everyday. He is still ~~walking~~ ~~standing~~ ~~standing~~ "standing still" and calling. He is calling each of us to throw off the blindness in our lives that keeps us from seeing what He wants of us. We may not possess physical blindness, but too often we possess spiritual blindness simply because we are unwilling to just place our complete selves into ~~God's~~ the hands

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA
WEDNESDAY EVENING LENTEN SERVICE MARCH 12, 1975
REV. RALPH C. LINK, PASTOR
MRS. EUGENE STEPHENSON, ORGANIST
MR. RALPH COOPER, CHOIR DIRECTOR
SHARI McBRIDE, GREG BOSKO - ACOLYTES

ORDER OF WORSHIP - 7:30 P.M.

PRELUDE MUSIC: MRS. STEPHENSON
SILENT MEDITATION
*PROCESSIONAL HYMN No. 467 "I LOVE TO TELL THE STORY"
*INVOCATION - CHORAL AMEN
SCRIPTURE LESSON: MARK 10: 46-52
*GLORIA PATRI
*EVENING PRAYERS AND CHORAL RESPONSE
OFFERING
OFFERTORY
HYMN No. 481 "DAY IS DYING IN THE WEST"
SERMON: "PIECE BY PIECE -- JERICO"
SERMON PRAYER
*HYMN No. 472 "WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS"
BENEDICTION 211
POSTLUDE MRS. STEPHENSON

----- *CONGREGATION STANDING -----
USHERS TONIGHT WILL BE SAME AS USHERS FOR SUNDAY:
*WALLY FEDER, JOHN SNOW, MONT MacKINNEY, JAMES MALONEY
AND STEVE VARGO.

GOOD FRIDAY BREAKFAST - FOR WOMEN - YWCA AUDITORIUM,
7:30 A.M. \$2.50 PER PERSON - RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED
PROGRAM: CONTEMPORARY EASTER PLAY.

GOOD FRI. BREAKFAST - FOR MEN - YMCA - 6:00 P.M. -
J. W. HARMON AND KENNETH WEITZEL HAVE TICKETS
SPEAKER WILL BE RICHARD K. KENNEDY, D.D. FROM PITTS.

IF YOU KNOW OF ANYONE LOOKING FOR A CHURCH - CONTACT
MINISTER OR PUT A SLIP OF PAPER IN OFFERING PLATE.

Thurs 7:00 Fellowship Chs Dr. Fgh & abortion
FRIDAY - WORK NIGHT FOR ARC CLASS OR ANYONE WILLING
TO HELP - 6:30 P.M. - NEED ROLLERS, BRUSHES, STEP LADDERS
AND A LOT OF HELP.

Welcome visitors/how many 1st, 2nd, 3, 4, 5?

HYMN 211 / NO CHURCH NEXT WED. SPECIAL SERVICE
CALVARY - PAPERS IN NARTHEX.

time stand still 2/
 let alone minis needs sum1 has prob
 Go from morn til nite/fall in bed exhaust & if ask
 "at most worthy thing dun 2day?" Say, kept on go
 "unlike Js/ He stood still"
 Not invite 2 laziness, but invite tak note
 eds round us every day
 Not thing 2 B noted Bartimaeus saw, recog Js 4 wat
 He was/could not 6 with eyes, but cud C with hart
 How unlikie so many other folk
 They want grand entr in2 lives by sum1 dressed royal
 Want grand treatment & not content simp childlike
 faith needed 2 hav Master cum in2 lives
 Sum1 lde said, "We must ask peop 2 think, but we must
not expect them 2 Beome theols B4 they are Xpians."
 Xpianity Bgins personal reaction 2 Js Xp
 It not intellect understand doctrines of church,
 or G's complete plan for past/pres/fut of world.
 Instead, it instinctive feel within hart that here
 is 1 who can meet my needs.
 May never underst Bult/Tillich/Brunner or deep theos
 This no matter/what matter response hart 2 cry that
 comes from within your own hart
 Last thing noted by Barti cum 2 Js, he not content
 just 2 B healed.
 He accepted his heal but then followed Him
 He start with need/showed thanks 4 fulfil of need
 with loyalty 2 1 who took care of need
 But U C Sav still pass by harts lives countless
 peop everyday/still "STnd Still & calling"
 He call us 2 throw off blind our lives that keep
 from ~~xxxxx~~ see what He want of us.
 We may no possess phys blind, but 2 oft possess sp
 blif simp Beause we unwill 2 just place selves in2
 hand. Js Xp.
 Do U hear calling? Wn think this 2day change last
 hymn 2-211
 Hymn motivated by Holman Hunt paint Lt of World
 Perhaps U seen it, it beautiful
 Shirley I saw St. Paul's I think
 Js with crown head = King
 white robe = purity, mantle shoulder = priest
 stand outside door rusty hinges, grass weeds bramb
 on threshold
 lantern in hand signif He cum in darkness our lives
 He knock on door, strange no handle SIN
 or only ope from inside
 So Js stand outside our harts, only way in 4 us 2 ope
 this pce puzz 4 Lent that Jer, that tell of blind
 man meet Js & gives us examp 2 follow.

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 of Nazareth, he began to cry out
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When Spk Js & Jericho/spk NT Jer/& there diff
 OT Jer destroy U know if read Bib rdgs this week Jos
 Rebuilt same site later/NT Jer 1 mi S OT city
 About 15 mi Jeru/Her. Grt founder/Winter 4's 4 him
 Zacc best known tax coll held office Jer
 Js dine his very eleg hse/among fine city = best Pom
 City on W edge Jor plain/just outside city head SW
 2ward Jeru thru canyon WADI QELT/explain WADI
 thru this WADI main rd 2 Jeru
 This canyon resemb Grand Can,
 in these mtns Js face tempts aft Bap
 it now jorney thru here 4 last time.
 As 1k story in Mark, Js on way Pass. & He on way thru
 Jer & crowd of peop as well as discips
 2 reason lrg crowds/1. Rabbi teach as walk & Js teach
 2. Male Jew 12, liv 15 mi Jeru must go Pass
 impos keep law & many no can go/line sts look at
 pilgrims as go by & Js attract lrg audience
 20M priests Levites attach Temp/no all serv sam time
 26 grps in rotation
 But at Pass, all needed/many liv Jer, but not go ye
 Thus line sts C Js miracle worker
 Js discips approach N gate, blind man by rd
 Bartimaeus = Son Timai, Son of the unclean/Dad lepe?
 He listen sounds all round/begs preva & common
 1. t gather noise sum1 import/may have ask sum1
Read vs 47 TEXT
 He knew Him as a king/crowd maybe didn't like this
 try shut him up, no avail/more shush, more he cry ou
 like little kid spk loud, "Why don't U want me say?"
VS 48B again call Js S of David
 They permit him 2 cum 2 Js & Js ask VS 51a
He say 51b, very simp Js say Vs 52
 Here last heal by Js in Mark
 He only 15 mi appt destiny/end life & minis,
 yet, found time heal another blind man
 Can C sev noteworth things scrip
 1st Js no interest numbers/nor concern where was & 2
 w n He speak
 herd voice in drowd/voice ask assist/He stopped
 "He stood still" how wonderful 4 us 2 copy
 We often caught up hus bus every day lives no hav

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
 Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
 Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)









Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.